

STATE OF NEW YORK

6477

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 7, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. WEPRIN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to duty to report incidents to 9-1-1 and the county district attorney's office

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 491 of the social services law, as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 501 of the laws of 2012 and subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 126 of the laws of 2014, is amended to read as follows:

§ 491. Duty to report incidents. 1. (a) Mandated reporters shall report allegations of reportable incidents to a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and the vulnerable persons' central register as established by section four hundred ninety-two of this article and in accordance with the requirements set forth therein.

(b) Allegations of reportable incidents shall be reported immediately to a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and the vulnerable persons' central register upon discovery. For purposes of this article, "discovery" occurs when the mandated reporter witnesses a suspected reportable incident or when another person, including the vulnerable person, comes before the mandated reporter in the mandated reporter's professional or official capacity and provides the mandated reporter with reasonable cause to suspect that the vulnerable person has been subjected to a reportable incident. A report to the register shall include the name, title and contact information of every person known to the mandated reporter to have the same information as the mandated reporter concerning the reportable incident. [~~Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit a mandated reporter from contacting or reporting to law enforcement or emergency services before or after reporting to the vulnerable persons' central register.~~]

(c) The substance or content of any psychological, psychiatric, therapeutic, clinical or medical reports, evaluations or like materials or information pertaining to the treatment of a patient or client of a mandatory reporter who reports a reportable incident of such patient or

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 client pursuant to this article, must be provided by such mandatory
2 reporter upon request of the justice center for the protection of people
3 with special needs if such records are essential for a full investi-
4 gation of such allegation, notwithstanding any applicable privilege
5 which would otherwise bar the disclosure of such materials and records
6 pursuant to article forty-five of the civil practice law and rules or
7 other provision of law except applicable federal law governing the
8 disclosure of patient and related medical records.

9 2. Any person or official required to report allegations of reportable
10 incidents pursuant to this section may take or cause to be taken color
11 photographs of visible trauma and the face of the vulnerable person
12 named in the report and upon the consent of a person authorized to
13 consent to medical care for the vulnerable person, shall, if medically
14 indicated, cause to be performed a radiological examination of the
15 vulnerable person. Any photographs or radiological examinations taken
16 shall be provided to the justice center for use only for the purposes of
17 an investigation of a reportable incident.

18 3. (a) Any human services professional required by this article to
19 report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to a 9-1-1 operator, the
20 county district attorney's office and the vulnerable persons' central
21 register who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a
22 class [~~A misdemeanor~~] E felony.

23 (b) A mandated reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report a
24 case of suspected abuse or neglect to a 9-1-1 operator, the county
25 district attorney's office and the vulnerable persons' central register
26 may be subject to termination, subject to any applicable collective
27 bargaining agreement. Any person or official required by this article to
28 report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to a 9-1-1 operator, the
29 county district attorney's office and the vulnerable persons' central
30 register who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be civilly
31 liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

32 4. A medical or other public or private institution, state agency,
33 school, facility or provider agency or its vendors or contractors shall
34 not take any retaliatory personnel action, as such term is defined in
35 paragraph (e) of subdivision one of section seven hundred forty of the
36 labor law, against an employee or agent or vendor or contractor because
37 such employee or agent or vendor or contractor believes that he or she
38 has reasonable cause to suspect that a vulnerable person has been
39 subjected to a reportable incident and that employee or agent or vendor
40 or contractor therefore makes a report in accordance with this section
41 and/or cooperated with the investigation of a reportable incident. A
42 court of competent jurisdiction may grant injunctive relief to any
43 person determined to have been subjected to such retaliation.

44 5. All state and private agencies with mandatory reporters shall
45 retrain all staff on reporting to a 9-1-1 operator and the county
46 district attorney's office and all state and private websites, training
47 manuals, informational brochures or pamphlets directing reporting shall
48 state that such instances be reported to a 9-1-1 operator and the county
49 district attorney's office. All former posters and wallet cards and any
50 other information directing reporting of crimes and emergencies to the
51 justice center shall be removed and replaced by 9-1-1 reporting posters,
52 wallet cards and all other sources that shall be located conspicuously
53 in a timely manner.

54 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.